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Always Writing

Writer Dandi Daley Mackall, BJ '71, is a master of many genres.

Story by Dale Smith

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Lots of authors specialize: fiction, nonfiction, children, young adult, Christian, mystery. Dandi Daley Mackall, BA '71, of West Salem, Ohio, has her hand in all of these niches. With more than 400 titles to her credit during the past 35 years, Mackall has long been a successful writer. Lately she's on a new level. In 2011, her mystery manuscript *The Silence of Murder* was sold at auction to Knopf, a high roller in the publishing world. In 2013, the book won an Edgar Award, named after Edgar Allen Poe and presented by the Mystery Writers of America. And Oct. 18, 2014, a movie based



Dandi Daley Mackall writes books across genres from children's to mysteries. Photo courtesy of Dandi Daley Mackall.

on her romance *My Boyfriends' Dogs* is scheduled to air on the Hallmark channel.

Mackall says she does not compose quickly, but she's always working. "I get up early, and if I'm at home, I'm usually at my computer. Or, if I'm driving or walking around the lake on our property, I'm talking into a tape recorder. My neighbor refers to me as 'that person who talks to herself,' but it really helps with dialogue." Then she heads back to the computer and revises her recorded ideas as she types them into the manuscript.

At the moment, Mackall is deep into a novel inspired by her parents that she has worked on occasionally for 10 years. "It's set during World War II. She was a nurse. He was a physician. They met during training. She shipped out to France, and he went to Germany, but they wrote each other two or three times a day." Her new series of rhyming books for children is coming out, one about each season. And sales of her *Winnie the Horse Gentler* series continue to mount over 1 million, she says.

"My whole career, people have advised me: 'Focus, and you'd be *the* young adult or *the* middle grades writer,'" Mackall says. "And yeah, that's wise, but I would not have had nearly as much fun."

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